



WILBERFORCE'S ATTACK ON VICE IS NEEDED IN THE USA

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This writer has been researching the life and thinking of William Wilberforce, who was the chief advocate for the elimination of slavery in the British empire, which in fact was abolished by Great Britain in 1833. This research revealed that Wilberforce also advocated for a change in morals and manners in Great Britain and its worldwide empire. He was concerned that Biblical values were eroding, and that a much higher standard of personal as well as public conduct was needed among English-speaking Christians. He thus was a preacher and polemicist to the country/empire as a whole, and not only to a particular congregation from a particular pulpit. Wilberforce, in addition to fighting to end slavery based on the Biblical premise that *all* men and women were created in God's own image, [sought to encourage](#) "piety and virtue, vice, profaneness and immorality." This aspect of his work or mission became known as the Society for the Suppression of Vice (SSV).

This SSV, founded in 1802, grew rapidly and had over 1200 members by 1812. It was authorized by King George III who, the reader undoubtedly recalls, was the monarch whose control we rejected during our War for Independence from 1776 to 1783. Thus, the move for moral purity had *legal* authorization by a king whom we considered to be so immoral.

The list of SSV's offending behaviors was quite long. It included profanation of the Lord's Day (Sunday), profane swearing, publication of blasphemous, licentious and obscene books, selling by false weights and measures, keeping of disorderly public houses, brothels, and gaming houses, illegal lotteries, cruelty to animals.

Well, dear reader, are you at all shocked that the one man who was the key player in bringing slavery and the slave trade to an end in the British Empire was, at the same time, on this moral crusade? Are you suddenly aware that the obverse side of the moral coin that was being held by Mr. Wilberforce contains all these moral injunctions? That high-minded and Biblically grounded individual saw then that slavery, although particularly un-Biblical, was only one side of the moral crisis besetting British society. If he was concerned about the general moral estate of Great Britain at that time, how much more should our Senators, Representatives, Judges, elected officials of all stripes—Governors, state legislators, mayors, city council members, etc.—feel dismayed and disgusted not only by our country's moral downslide, which, by early 19th century standards, is our moral collapse.

In New York City, while prostitution is still illegal on the books, the ladies are no longer looked upon as perpetrators to be tried. The women are not put in jail, and instead therapy is offered. The judgment

that this behavior is degrading and fosters a decline in public morals is removed from the equation. Prostitution is perceived simply as a type of maladjustment.

Also, the ACLU has successfully fought against obscenity laws for decades to the point where outright porno magazines are publicly for sale in stores and have been so for decades.

When I was growing up, gambling was restricted to Nevada. Now it is a staple in many states. Lotteries of all kinds are also advertised, and tickets are for sale in every bodega and newspaper store. With these gambling outlets, the idea of something for nothing pervades society. It accentuates the covetousness of society condemned without equivocation in the Ten Commandments. Gambling in the stock market is considered a wholesome and admirable "business activity."

What about swearing? God's name is regularly used in vain for decades. When this writer worked in an office with industrial engineers, the F-word was standard fare. One pastor I had years ago said that whenever he felt frustrated as a young man, he would start cursing. When he entered Bible college, he still had the same habit. But since he noted that the other students did not indulge in that profane pursuit, he resolved and prayed to be able to overcome that sin. He kept on cursing until one day, feeling very frustrated by some setback, he found that he grabbed the back of a chair (as he typically would) but that no curse words came out. The vain, immoral reactions to life's frustrations were overcome. Although there were some occasional outbursts after that one successful moment, the corrupt speech was clearly defeated. Finally, it disappeared entirely.

Licentious and obscene books and films are standard fare. Nudity, conjugal relations, passionate kissing scenes, couples undressing themselves or each other, as well as an explosion of pornographic videos in theaters and especially on the Internet has turned our country into a sex-obsessed village. Conservative publications obsess about the sexualization of children in the early grades in our schools, but have allowed the pornographic obsessions of the Internet to run amuck. Pornography is driving a wedge even between the adult male and female populations. Settings to prevent this on cell phones or computers are strict (against), moderate, or off, but those settings are easily accessed and changeable. The concept of "prurience" that was once the basis for declaring reading or visual matter obscene is now out the window. Instead, any laws attempting to restrain this unfettered obscenity and vulgarity are considered an infringement on free speech.

This writer was invited to a lecture by someone representing the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union).

He spoke forcefully about the suppression of free speech that obscenity censorship represented, and how pleased he was that his organization had been at the forefront of crushing the accursed, rigid, Victorian morality behind all censorship.

During the Q&A following his talk, one person in the audience said that censorship was challenged because some literature like the novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by D.H. Lawrence had some obscene passages; but it was nonetheless considered to have redeeming literary merit, which offset the need for censorship. But the questioner then asked, "What about patently obscene material which has no redeeming literary merit? Shouldn't that material be banned?" The speaker just brushed off the questioner by saying, "I don't think so." He gave no reasons in support of his primitive position.

We know that obscene literature degrades the minds of the users. Lust in the heart and mind—not only homosexual lust as some moralists would say—is according to the Bible to be discouraged as it offends the Living God who desires us to live on the spiritual level. All lust outside of wedlock is ungodly. Wilberforce understood that the morals of the Bible are eternal and uplifting. We need to revamp our laws and enforce our laws that are already on the books. We conservatives complain about the sexualization of children in the present world of trannie-ology; but we must acknowledge that in all areas of morals, including the sexual, we have been too lax for decades in allowing immorality to hold sway. Just as we are surely glad to be rid of the travesty of slavery, we must stand wholeheartedly against the trashy tolerance that has developed over the past few decades.

*Jeffrey Ludwig presently teaches philosophy at a public university. He has also taught at Harvard, Penn State, and Juniata College, and during a stint as a high school teacher was listed four times in *Who's Who Among America's High School Teachers*. His latest book, *Christian Perspectives, Vol.1* is now [available](#).*

Featured: "William Wilberforce," by John Rising; painted ca. 1790.

